

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: AUGUST 23, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: OTHERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS	TESSIER	REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
	BELDEN	KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
	GABRIELS	VONDA BEATTIE, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
	KENNY	WILLIAM THOMAS, CHAIRMAN
	SHEEHAN	HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE &
	MERLINO	FISCAL SERVICES
		JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:		NICHOLAS CAIMANO, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR	STEC	SUPERVISOR GERAGHTY
		SUPERVISOR VANNESS
		JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF
		ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL SERVICES
		CHARLENE DiRESTA, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 1:34 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, who distributed copies of the Agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the Agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson advised she had three resolution requests for new contracts, all of which were the results of Request for Proposals (RFP). She presented the requests as follows:

1. Request to authorize a new contract with Glens Falls Printing, LLC for printing of the 2008 Warren County Motorcoach/Group Tour Planner, commencing September 21, 2007 and terminating October 31, 2007, for a lump sum amount not to exceed \$4,422, to be paid upon completion of the project.
2. Request to authorize a new contract with Tech Valley Printing & Document Management for printing of the 2007-2008 Warren County

Winter Events Brochure, commencing September 21, 2007 and terminating October 31, 2007, for a lump sum amount not to exceed \$8,695, to be paid upon completion of the project.

3. Request for a new contract with Tech Valley Printing & Document Management for printing of the 2008 Warren County Whitewater Rafting Brochure, commencing October 17, 2007 and terminating November 30, 2007, for a lump sum amount not to exceed \$5,408, to be paid upon completion of the project.

Motion was made by Mr. Gabriels, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize the three new contracts as outlined above. *Copies of the resolution requests are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the September 21, 2007 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson apprised that the responses from the Request for Proposal for the printing of the 2008 Warren County Travel Guide had not been received yet, as the RFP had gone out late from the Purchasing Department. She was requesting authorization for a new contract with the lowest responsible bidder, once the proposals were received. She added that the proposals were due on September 6, 2007 and she would have the necessary resolution request to the County Attorney by September 7, 2007. She estimated that the printing costs would be approximately \$90,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to authorize a new contract with the lowest responsible bidder which would be determined by September 6, 2007, for the printing of the 2008 Warren County Travel Guide. *The necessary resolution was authorized for the September 21, 2007 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson stated that the Tourism Department had recently held a casting call for local talent to be used in photography and video advertising. She was requesting authorization for a stipend of \$50 to be paid to each of the models used. Mr. Tessier asked if a release would be needed for each of the models and Ms. Johnson affirmed.

Motion was made by Mr. Gabriels, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize the Director of Tourism to utilize models for photography and video with a stipend of \$50 paid to each model for their services.

Ms. Johnson expounded that she was requesting to rescind Resolution No. 227

of 2003, which had been amended by Resolution No. 340 of 2003. She stated that the resolution had been developed to establish the Tourism Promotion Citizens Advisory Committee (TPCAC); however, she added, the members appointments had expired in December of 2005 and no action had been taken to abolish the Committee.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to rescind Resolution No. 227 of 2003. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 21, 2007 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson apprised that her next request was to amend the 2007 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$11,205 to reflect the receipt of revenue from the Travel Guide Advertisements and the Group Tour Planner.

Motion was made by Mr. Gabriels, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to forward the request to amend the 2007 County budget, as outlined above, to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.*

Referring to Item No. 3 on the Agenda, Ms. Johnson stated the 2008 Tourism Occupancy (A.6417) Budget reflected a 2008 request of \$3,115,000 as compared to the 2007 appropriations of \$3,084,789, an increase of \$30,211. She added that 2007 was the first year that the Tourism Department had been entirely funded by Occupancy Tax funds.

Ms. Johnson stated that 2007 had been a transitional year with the Tourism Department bringing all the work in-house, that had previously been done by Paul Kaza Associates. She apprised that the Tourism Department had offered more cooperative opportunities this year by partnering with almost 1,000 County-wide tourism related businesses. She noted that office operations were much more efficient and she added, the Department was utilizing the talents of the Information Technology Department for website updating, programming, electronic email blasts and the conducting of online incentives. She said that all print advertising was now designed and purchased for placement in-house. She added that all broadcast advertising was designed in-house and then contracted out for printing at a 5% markup, versus the standard 15% markup. She apprised that the most important change had been acquiring the talent of the new Creative Director, Linda Wohlers.

Ms. Johnson advised that there were no significant changes in the budget categories from 2007 as they had only been refined. She said that \$15,000 had been requested to cover the costs of the assistance of the Information Technology Department for technical support. She added that \$11,000 had also been requested for design assistance from an outside source. She apprised that the amount of the New York State Matching Funds Grant final award would be known this fall and she would notify the Budget Officer of the necessary changes.

Ms. Johnson stated that she had two other requests in the proposed Budget. She said that first was to remove the sick leave incentive for two employees. She added that the second request was for an increase in the salary of Joanne Conley (employee #5808), Assistant Tourism Coordinator, from \$34,967 to \$38,967, an increase of \$4,000. She stated that she wanted to thank Vonda Beattie for all her hard work in the preparation of the 2008 Budget request.

Mr. Kenny apprised that there was a significant decrease in Code A.6417 444 (Travel/Education/Conference) which reflected a 2008 request of \$17,550 as compared to the 2007 appropriations of \$30,815, a decrease of \$13,265. He added that he had expected to see a requested increase. Ms. Johnson responded that the amount had been reduced in part by employees using fleet vehicles which saved on mileage reimbursement. She added that the majority of the shows for 2008 were closer to home (for example, the State of Virginia as compared to the west coast), which also reduced the cost of travel. Mr. Kenny stated that he felt the County might be criticized for attending less shows in 2008. Mr. Caimano apprised that it would be the same number or more shows using less funds. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, noted that only \$8,000 had been spent so far for 2007.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Johnson apprised that she had attended a meeting with the new Marketing Director of the 'I Love New York' Campaign. She added that they would be relaunching the new 'I Love New York' logo in the spring. She further added that they were targeting New York and Toronto with the advertising.

Mr. Tessier stated that Canadian tourism was up by 20%-30% with local businesses. He stated that there were more Canadian visitors visiting Warren County towns than in the past. Mr. Caimano stated that Congresswoman Gillibrands' Office should be contacted to discuss the County's concerns as to the

possible decline of Canadian tourists, due to the proposed passport requirements. Mr. Payne apprised that Niagara County was expecting a 39% decrease in tourism due to the proposed passport requirements.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to refer the issue of alerting State Legislators to the County's concerns as to the possible decline in tourism from Canadians due to the proposed passport requirements to the Legislative Committee.

Ms. Johnson apprised that she had left the Group Tour/Convention Promoter salary in the 2008 Budget request. She added that Tanya Brand, Senior Tourism Specialist, was doing a wonderful job of taking over the duties of this position. She said that Ms. Brand would take the civil service exam in October and would apply for the position.

Mr. Caimano noted that as of August 16, 2007 the amount of Occupancy Tax that had been collected was \$850,716.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Gabriels and carried unanimously to approve the Tourism Occupancy Budget (A.6417), as presented, and to authorize the Committee Chairman to sign it and forward same to the Budget Officer.

Mr. Tessier stated that the interest and penalties that were being collected for Occupancy Tax were currently being deposited to the General Fund. He added that these monies should be credited to the Occupancy Tax fund. He further added that it amounted to \$15,000 to date for 2007. Ms. Beattie noted that from 2004 until the present, the amount collected in interest and penalties had been approximately \$37,000. Mr. Kenny asked if it was possible to recoup all of those funds and Mr. Caimano responded that he would look into the matter.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to forward the request that interest and penalties collected for occupancy tax be allocated to the Tourism Occupancy Budget as opposed to the General Fund.

Ms. Johnson apprised that there had been a meeting on Monday morning concerning the proposed improvements to the Information Center between Exits 17 & 18 Northbound on the Adirondack Northway. She added that in attendance

had been two representatives from the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Senator Little, Mr. Caimano, Mr. Tessier, Mr. Payne and herself. She said the representatives from NYSDOT had advised that the project might possibly commence in 2010. She advised that the County had informed NYSDOT that it was in favor of connecting the Information Center to the restrooms; however, she added, the County wanted the State to entirely fund the project. She noted that the County had also expressed that they wanted the utilities to be paid with State funds. She said that it had been suggested that there should be signage on the Information Center, in the meantime, that advised it was open 24-hours. Mr. Caimano stated that Senator Little had asked the representatives of NYSDOT what they wanted done and added that the representatives had spoken for ten minutes without actually answering the question.

Discussion ensued.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist